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ABSTRACT

This book examines how four adolescent girls constructed the meaning of their bodies, discussing oppression and resistance, voice and silence, and girls' desires to be seen and heard for who they are as they experience themselves individually and socially. It presents the struggles of two educational researchers trying to create ethical research practices that nurtured the growth of agency among project participants. A salient element for them in this work was helping girls develop as active agents in their own worlds. Chapter 1 introduces the issue. Chapter 2 critiques five theoretical issues: 1) adolescence as a period of crisis; 2) dichotomous thinking and objectification; 3) feminist understandings of the body; 4) body image research; and 5) constructions of health. Chapter 3 describes how one researcher worked with the girls, noting issues the researchers experienced in doing this work. Chapter 4 explores various nuances and complexities of how fashion permeates adolescent culture. Chapter 5 highlights how girls' desires to be noticed operate in attracting the attention of boys, separating girls from each other, and encouraging body regulation. Chapter 6 describes what the researchers learned about race and racism, noting how racial pride coexisted with racial oppression. Chapter 7 examines strategies and directions that curriculum workers might take to support the development of agency among adolescent girls. (Contains 126 references.) (SM)

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